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DEVELOPING DISCUSSION OF LANGUAGE CHANGE INTO A THREE-DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF LINGUISTIC PHENOMENA

Abstract

The concepts of *change from above* (CFA) and *change from below* (CFB) have been employed by sociolinguists for decades: but 'above' and 'below' *what* exactly? Popularized by William Labov, these terms are most frequently used to describe complementary, highly distinct processes of language change. Subsequent interpretations have subtly altered the definitions of these terms, and as a result, CFA and CFB have been used to refer to different things by different people. Often, the resultant phenomena are not as complementary or distinct as they first seem. This article analyses the various interpretations of CFA and CFB with an aim to clarify how the terms have been used, and to propose a new and thorough taxonomical model for linguistic phenomena. Leading scholarly viewpoints are examined (Labov 1972, Crystal 1987, Ferguson 1987, Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, Ellis 1999, Romaine 2003 *inter alia*) and three bifurcating axes are formed, revealing what 'above' and 'below' variously relate to. The axes of +/–metacommentary, +/–overt prestige and +/–planned will be explained and formed into a three-dimensional model of linguistic phenomena, thus constituting an innovative development in the ongoing debate surrounding CFA and CFB.

1. Introduction

Discussion of language variation and change has been a central concern of sociolinguistics for decades. Many concepts have been employed and modified by scholars and perhaps few more so than the ideas of *change from above* (henceforth, CFA) and *change from below* (CFB). These are used to refer to highly distinct, complementary processes of language change and were popularized by William Labov in his 1972 work *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. The present article will examine the diverse ways in which the ideas of CFA and CFB have been adopted and adapted by subsequent linguists, so as to organize the myriad uses of these

terms (sections 2 and 3). As a result of this discussion, it will become apparent that there are several commonalities between different interpretations, which will prove useful in examining not only language change, but other related phenomena. Based on these findings, this article will propose a three-dimensional cube model that can be used to classify different linguistic phenomena related to language change (section 4). It should be stressed that this paper makes no attempt to propose new definitions for CFA and CFB. The existing debate around these terms is used as a tool to create an innovative model and thus arrive at a new means to classify linguistic phenomena, and to rigorously determine their distinctiveness from one another in a more effective way than through recourse to the often ambiguous terms CFA and CFB. Moreover, since the three-dimensional cube model is being proposed here for the first time, any generalizations regarding the predictive power of the model (given in the discussion in section 5) are necessarily tentative, and will only be strengthened after extensive further study.

2. Fundamental notions of CFA and CFB: Revealing three axes

The terms CFA and CFB are often used to refer to complementary, distinct processes of language change. Definitions of these concepts necessarily talk about processes as being from 'above' or 'below', which begs the question 'above or below *what* exactly?' Although the terms CFA and CFB aim to index complementary and distinct processes, it will be shown that sometimes the phenomena they define are not as different from one another as they first seem. The following sections will reveal and discuss three bifurcating axes of study: that is to say, three different things that changes are considered to be 'above' or 'below'. Processes of change (or indeed, as will be shown, other related linguistic phenomena) can then be placed at a positive ('above') or negative ('below') end of these axes. Admittedly, sociolinguistic realities are not always categorizable in such a binary fashion. However, this strategy is a useful first step in getting to grips with the terminology at hand and developing it into a useful model that integrates as much existing research as possible. The aim of such a model is to create a rigorous and unambiguous means of distinguishing linguistic phenomena, through

the amalgamation of extant interpretations of CFA and CFB.

It is important to use Labov's original (1972) work (rather than later Labovian developments to be discussed in section 3.1) as a point of departure, since it was from here that other scholars went on to modify and reinterpret the ideas of CFA and CFB. His terminology was coined with specific reference to sound change, and was used as follows:

> [Changes from below are] below the level of social awareness. The variable shows no pattern of stylistic variation in the speech of those who use it, affecting all items in a given word class. The linguistic variable is an *indicator*... [A c]hange from above [is a correction] towards the model of the highest status group (Labov 1972: 178-9).

Here, there are two factors clearly at play. Firstly, and most importantly, is the notion of stylistic variation and the related concern of speakers being able to offer *metacommentary*. This becomes apparent when we look at the related Labovian terminology of indicators, markers and stereotypes which, as can be seen in the above citation, are used to illustrate the notions of CFA and CFB. Labov uses his term 'stereotype' to refer to variables on which speakers can offer metacommentary,[1] and which show stylistic variation; such variables, when they are language changes, are CFAs. He uses the term 'marker' to refer to a variable on which speakers cannot offer metacommentary, but which still shows a degree of stylistic variation (Labov 1972: 178-9); Labov's initial definitions explicitly state that such variables can arise through processes of CFB, and also imply that they can result from processes of CFA. It must be stressed that, while subsequent work has been less ready to draw the parallels between Labovian markers and CFBs, this relationship was made explicit in Labov (1972). The mechanism of sound change is given as a set of thirteen stages, with the first eight referring to CFBs and the final five to CFAs. Table 1 (below) presents a succinct summary of the thirteen stages, as given in Labov (1972: 178-80), along with their status as CFA or CFB:

[1] Labov (1972: 314) describes these variables as 'a part of the general knowledge of adult members of the society.'

Stage	Description	CFA/CFB
1	Origin of sound change in a restricted subset of the speech community.	CFB
2	Sound change used systematically by all members of the subset without stylistic variation; variable is now an *indicator*.	
3	Subsequent generations of subgroup extend the sound change beyond the model set by their parents: 'hypercorrection from below'.	
4	Sound change adopted by other groups.	
5	Sound change reaches across whole speech community and stops.	
6	Sound change becomes a norm for whole speech community; starts to show stylistic variation and becomes a *marker*.	
7	Phonological space adjusts to accommodate sound change.	
8	Adjustments lead to further, associated sound changes.	
9	If sound change originated in non-high status groups, then it is stigmatized by high-status groups.	CFA
10	CFA driven by stigmatization: reactionary correction towards prestige models. Both stylistic and social stratification shown.	
11	'Hypercorrection from above' of low-status groups towards the new prestige target.	
12	Extreme stigmatization of sound change can lead to *stereotyping* of form.	
13	If sound change originated in high-status groups, it becomes a prestige model itself.	

Table 1: Thirteen stages of sound change, as in Labov (1972: 178-80)

All thirteen stages need not occur consecutively: indeed, this would be counterintuitive since CFBs do not necessarily go on to become CFAs, and nor do CFAs need to start life as CFBs.

Moreover, it is clear from the above table that not all stages can occur sequentially (for example, stages 9 and 13 detail alternative scenarios). The sixth stage describing CFBs is when the variable starts to show stylistic variation, and thus becomes a marker (Labov 1972: 179): the link between CFBs and markers is thus explicitly made. When Labov turns to CFAs, no mention is made of markers, and so we can only infer that markers exemplify CFAs if we interpret all thirteen stages sequentially (i.e. the first CFB stage, when it occurs, comes after the last CFA stage – in short, that stage 9 follows on from stage 8) and if we also interpret indicators, markers and stereotypes themselves as consecutive. Such a reading of Labov's mechanism is certainly possible, and indeed has often been made; but it must be borne in mind that this is the interpretation required if one wants to state that markers can exemplify CFAs (their potential to exemplify CFBs is undisputed as this is explicitly stated in Labov 1972). Labov (1972: 179) clearly states that markers arise from processes of CFB, but the case for markers arising from CFA is dependent on a sometimes problematic sequential interpretation of the thirteen stages.

Interestingly, this inherent trait of markers as CFBs perhaps indicates that Labov's notion of 'social awareness' is more akin to 'level of consciousness' than to 'awareness', if the latter is defined as the ability of a given linguistic variable to show stylistic variation, irrespective of consciousness. This makes use of a commonly held definition of awareness and serves our purposes well as it is clearly distinct from consciousness. Consciousness is taken as the Lockean notion of "the perception of what passes in a man's own mind" (Locke 1690: 132), while awareness is a purely neurological response to stimuli. Labov himself refers to 'conscious awareness' (Labov 1972: 314) which arguably blurs the lines between the two concepts. We will keep these concepts separate, as this allows for more fine-grained distinctions when defining linguistic phenomena. Finally, Labov uses the term 'indicator' to refer to variables of which speakers are neither aware nor conscious, which thus do not show stylistic variation, and obviously speakers cannot offer metacommentary thereon; such variables are CFBs. All of this information is presented succinctly in figure 1:

level of consciousness	Level 1 (conscious)	CFA	Stereotype	Speakers can offer metacommentary, and stylistic variation is shown.
level of awareness	Level 2 (subconscious)	CFB (CFA?)	Marker	Speakers cannot offer metacommentary, but still show stylistic variation.
	Level 3 (unconscious)	CFB	Indicator	Speakers cannot offer metacommentary, and show no stylistic variation

Figure 1: Labov's 1972 stereotypes, markers and indicators as CFAs and CFBs.

The above summary reveals two dimensions that distinguish markers, indicators and stereotypes, namely ‘stylistic variation’ and ‘metacommentary’. We can also infer which of these two is of more importance in the pursuit of a primary differentiating factor between CFA and CFB. If stylistic variation were our key distinguishing factor, then we would be drawing a line between stereotypes and markers on the one side, and indicators on the other. This is clearly problematic, since we know that both markers and indicators can arise a result of CFB (Labov explicitly says so, 1972: 179). Therefore, stylistic variation cannot be our primary dividing criterion, since this would result in the two types of variables we *know* can arise from CFB appearing on opposite sides of our ‘above’ and ‘below’ distinction. In order to avoid this, markers and indicators must appear on one side of our division, with stereotypes on the other. A key axis of distinction is therefore whether speakers can provide metacommentary on the variable in question, which will be represented as ***+/–metacommentary*.**

Secondly, Labov's definitions take into account the notion of changes as driven by overt prestige. Introduced by Labov and further elucidated by Trudgill and Chambers (1998) and Meyerhoff (2006), overt prestige is the quality 'associated with a variant that speakers are aware of and can talk about in terms of standardness, or aesthetic and moral evaluations like being 'nicer' or 'better'' (Meyerhoff 2006: 292). This can be contrasted with items high in covert

prestige, which is 'a norm or target that is oriented to without the speaker even being aware they are orienting to it' (Meyerhoff 2006: 288). Labov's instances of CFA seek to approximate 'the model of the highest status group', i.e. the set of linguistic items highest in overt prestige. This notion will prove of great importance to future scholars' interpretations of the term, since it forms a key part of Labov's definition; as such, another bifurcating axis can be created, which will be represented as ***+/–overt prestige.***

A different interpretation of CFA is offered by Charles Ferguson, and focuses on issues of language planning:

> Change from above... takes place when an active language ideology, an individual language planner, or a language planning agency initiates an explicit standardising proposal (Ferguson 1987: 304).

Here what defines a change as being 'from above' is its level of planning. If a language change is explicitly planned as detailed by Ferguson, then it is deemed 'from above'. Thus, a third potential axis of study becomes apparent, which will be represented as ***+/–planned.***

3. CFA and CFB along one and two axes

As stated, many academics have made use of the terms CFA and CFB. While some have stuck closely to the Labov (1972) definition (represented in the present article by adherence to the two axes of +/–metacommentary and +/–overt prestige), others have adopted a different stance. This has occasionally resulted in the terms CFA and CFB referring to greatly divergent phenomena, depending on the scholarly viewpoint followed. Here, we focus on definitions that can be categorized using either one or two of the three axes given above. This includes Labov's own later treatment of his terms in subsequent work; these will be addressed separately at the end of the section.

Certain definitions of CFA and CFB used only one of our three bifurcating axes, as in the following entry in Crystal's *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*:

> [In Labov's 'fourth floor' experiment] /r/ had been unconsciously recognised as a marker of high prestige, and was beginning to be used in careful lower-

> class speech. The direction of change was 'from above'... [While in Labov's fieldwork on Martha's Vineyard] islanders came to imitate the way the fishermen were speaking, because [again subconsciously] they admired their traditional character and way of life. In due course, the change spread throughout the island - a change 'from below' (Crystal 1987: 332).[2]

This definition offers a radically different view of the concepts of CFA and CFB than those already seen from Labov (1972) and Ferguson. Of our three axes, Crystal's distinction focuses on +/–overt prestige. As such, the processes arrived at are not wholly distinct from one another, since (for example) these two changes are identical in their means of implementation, both arising from speaker contact. Moreover, Crystal's analysis constitutes something of a departure from Labov (1972) since it does not focus on the +/–metacommentary dimension (which I have analyzed as the primary criterion for distinguishing between the processes in the first place). Other definitions have also chosen to only focus on one dimension, but remain considerably closer to the Labov (1972) original definitions:

> In order to understand the role of social class in language change, it is essential to understand the distinction between changes that take place below the level of consciousness, so-called *changes from below*, and those that take place above the level of consciousness, or *changes from above* (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998: 188).

Here, attention is paid to the +/–metacommentary dimension, with specific reference made to the 'level of consciousness'.[3] This definition does not discuss Labov's mention of the 'highest social group' thereby not adhering to the +/–overt prestige dimension, but nevertheless arguably remains closer to Labov's original ideas than the above Crystal definition. It is

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[2] Crystal's interpretations of CFA and CFB remain unchanged in the second (1997: 334) and third (2010: 342) editions of this work.

[3] Indeed, as has been argued here with reference to Labov's work, 'consciousness' may be a more accurate term than Labov's 'awareness' as it captures Labov's own distinction with indicators and markers as CFBs, and stereotypes as CFAs (see figure 1).

therefore possible to deduce that the metacommentary axis is the most central to Labov's (1972) definition, since if one divides solely along this axis, a far more faithful interpretation of Labov's ideas is yielded, as in Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1998) than if one were to only use his secondary dimension of overt prestige, as in Crystal (1987).

In other cases, researchers have adhered to Labov's (according to my reading) dual-axis definition, as follows:

> Sociolinguists have distinguished between 'change from above' and 'change from below' to refer to the differing points of departure for the diffusion of linguistic innovations through the social hierarchy. Change from above is conscious change originating in more formal styles and in the upper end of the social hierarchy; change from below is below the level of conscious awareness, originating in the lower end of the social hierarchy (Romaine 2003: 103).

At first glance, Romaine's definition has addressed both the +/–metacommentary[4] and +/–overt prestige dimension, and as such would appear to remain very close to the Labovian concepts proposed. However, when examined more closely, differences between Labov (1972) and Romaine become evident. Although Labov (1972) stipulated that CFAs are forms which aim to approximate linguistic variables rich in overt prestige, the social class of the group motivating the change was never explicitly stated, much less offered as the prime differentiating factor between the two changes. While Romaine's stipulations that CFA and CFB must occur above and below the level of conscious awareness respectively, and that CFA has its origins in more formal styles, are accurate reproductions of Labov's (1972) use of the terms, her (main) claim that 'below' and 'above' refer to different points in the social hierarchy is something of a departure from Labov (1972).[5] Aside from the fact that 'below' and 'above' now seem to be speaker-external rather than speaker-internal concepts, her definition builds

[4] While metacommentary itself has not been explicitly mentioned, Romaine's definition leans on the intrinsically related notion of stylistic malleability.

[5] Though, as we shall see, display a great deal more in common with Labov (1994).

on Labov by arguably combining theoretical claims and empirical findings. While CFAs are often motivated by higher social classes (as these are typically the groups which use forms high in overt prestige) and CFBs often originate in lower social groups (perhaps due to members of the lower classes being more numerous, or at least, more frequently studied), this can only be ascertained from testing Labov's (1972) terms in action. If this class element is included in the definitions themselves, some arguably analogous processes are excluded from analysis by Romaine which could be included by Labov. For example, let us think of a process which begins above the level of conscious awareness (a stereotype or marker) and attempts to approximate a form high in overt prestige, but that originates in lower social classes; admittedly, such processes are rare, but when establishing a theory, this is not our primary concern – Romaine's definition cannot account for this, whereas Labov's can. As such, while it is important for a definition of these two processes to be based on multiple axes, it must not be unable to account for certain phenomena. A good example of this is Ellis' use of the terms under discussion:

> When a group drifts toward a new sound or vocabulary item and they are unconscious of it, this is a change from below [consciousness level]. The introduction of language change is from above when the change is consciously introduced by higher status groups (Ellis 1999: 150).

Ellis' definition references the central +/–metacommentary component and discusses the secondary +/–overt prestige dimension through his mention of 'higher status groups'. His notion of CFA reflects a subtle departure from Labov's ideas, also present in Romaine's definition. CFA is now actively introduced *by* higher status groups, rather than simply constituting a change which aims to replicate or approximate the language use of these higher status groups. This therefore makes an oblique reference to Ferguson's development, and my third axis, of +/–planned.

3.1 Labov revisited

As with other scholarly output, Labov's later work slightly revises his own (1972) definitions of

CFA and CFB, which adds further complexity to our picture of the phenomena these terms designate. Labov (1994: 78) claims that “above and below refer here simultaneously to levels of social awareness and positions in the socioeconomic hierarchy”, and it is arguably this interpretation that is echoed in Romaine (2003). However, Labov instantly problematizes the binary nature of any above/below distinction drawn along social hierarchical lines, stating that while CFAs are introduced by the dominant social class, CFBs can be introduced by any group. As stated in our discussion of Romaine’s (2003) definitions, the introduction of social hierarchy as a prime differentiating factor seems to conflate theoretical claims and empirical findings. Indeed, this is arguably resolved in Labov (2007: 346) where CFA and CFB are described as “not imply[ing] higher or lower on the socioeconomic scale”. Labov (1994) frequently relies on the primary concepts of consciousness and metacommentary as distinguishing factors between CFA and CFB, with CFA being described as “conscious reactions” (Labov 1994: 473) and CFB as “operat[ing] below the level of social consciousness” (Labov 1994: 140). Furthermore, Labov (1994: 321) alludes to our secondary axis of +/− overt prestige (alongside +/− metacommentary), when stating that CFAs are recognizable as they have “acquired a social stigma or prestige”.

Labov (2001) aims to locate the social nexuses of language change, thus providing a thorough account of when and where CFA and CFB are empirically attested. This work therefore clearly separates theoretical claims and frequently attested instances of CFA and CFB, and as such, the primary axis of conscious awareness as a differentiating factor is reinforced (cf. Labov 2001: 274, 361, 409, 444). An interesting aspect of this work is the explicit treatment of indicators, markers and stereotypes as instances of CFA and/or CFB. CFAs are simply described as high on a scale of social awareness, while it is specifically stated that CFBs begin life as indicators and then go on to become markers at a later stage in development (Labov 2001: 196). This treatment reinforces our earlier claim (represented in figure 1) based on Labov (1972) that the key distinction lay between indicators and markers

on the one hand, and stereotypes on the other.[6]

Taking into account recent Labovian output, there has not been great theoretical development in the usage of the terms since Labov (1972), with the exception of the conflicting claims regarding the role of the social hierarchy represented in Labov (1994) and Labov (2007). As such, our primary differentiating axes of +/− metacommentary and +/− overt prestige are still relevant. However, one key issue remains unconsidered: the meaning of terms surrounding 'consciousness' and 'awareness'. Recent work using Labovian terminology either conflates 'consciousness' and 'awareness', or offers no explanation as to potential differences between the terms, thereby implying that they are synonymous. Kristiansen (2010) separates 'consciousness' and 'awareness', though does not explain this distinction. His reference to 'consciousness' when paraphrasing Labov's notion of 'social awareness' in relation to CFA/CFB ("changes are classified as whether they come from *above* or *below* consciousness", Kristiansen 2010: 268), and later 'awareness' when discussing markers, indicators, stereotypes and stylistic malleability actually echoes the difference between consciousness and awareness presented in figure 1. Baranowski (2013: 271), refers to *above* and *below* as referring to 'the level of social awareness' (as in Labov 1972), and does not problematize or define these terms. In short, Labov and subsequent scholars variously use terms like 'consciousness', 'awareness' and 'conscious awareness', but distinctions between these terms are yet to be made clear. However, despite slight modifications to the original Labov (1972) definitions, it is clear that Labovian CFAs and CFBs can still be differentiated along the two axes of +/− metacommentary and +/− overt prestige.

4. Creating a three-axis model of linguistic phenomena

Scholars' work on CFA and CFB can be classified according to one or two of our axes, but

[6] However, Labov (2001) also affirms that there is nothing theoretically stopping CFBs, after having passed from indicator to marker, to then later become stereotypes, which represents a departure from the original configuration in figure 1.

never all three. Before using our three bifurcating axes to create a model of linguistic phenomena, let us remind ourselves of each one in turn:[7]

- ***+/–metacommentary.*** This refers to the degree to which speakers are aware and/or conscious of a particular linguistic variable. Returning to Labov's terminology (see section 2), we have indicators and markers on one side of the divide, being considered CFBs and possessing the quality –metacommentary. On the other side, we have stereotypes, considered CFAs and being +metacommentary. Labov's initial definition arguably posited the degree of speaker conscious awareness as the principal distinction between his two types of language change.
- ***+/–overt prestige.*** This refers to the fact that some language changes seek to reproduce variables that are high in overt linguistic prestige, while others do not. Occasionally, this has been developed by scholars (cf. Romaine 2003) into the notion of 'social class of the group motivating the change' as being of primary importance. My nomenclature here is very deliberate. If a phenomenon is to be deemed –overt prestige, this can mean one of two things: either it is driven by covert prestige, or it is not motivated by prestige at all.[8]

[7] Further dimensions to my model were considered, but ultimately rejected in the interests of parsimony, notably +/–responsive (i.e. is the phenomenon a response to external sociolinguistic or cultural factors or pressures, or is it internally motivated?). This was deemed unnecessary as it overlapped with the +/– planned axis. Phenomena which were –planned showed no differentiation if they were +responsive or – responsive. As such, the important distinction lies with the +/–planned axis, not the +/–responsive axis.

[8] Had the axis been simply +/- prestige, this would have resulted in phenomena motivated by covert or overt prestige both acquiring a +prestige value. While practices motivated by overt prestige seek to approximate a norm usually propounded by higher social classes, those driven by covert prestige often (though not necessarily) originate at the lower end of the social scale. In light of Labov's (1994) and Romaine's (2003) emphasis on the social class origins of language practices, it would be counterintuitive to accord overt and covert prestige driven phenomena the same value on the model.

- ***+/–planned.*** If a phenomenon is explicitly planned by a body, agency or ideology, then it is deemed +planned. This was of paramount importance in Ferguson's (1987) notion of CFA.

Our three, bifurcating axes can be represented graphically, as in figure 2:[9]

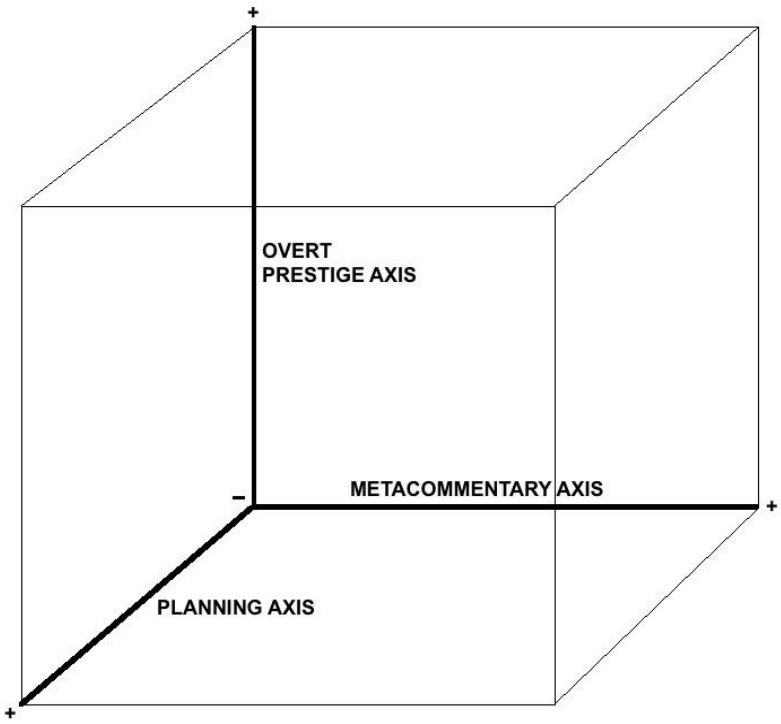

Figure 2: Three-dimensional graphical representation of our three axes of study.

[9] It should be noted that a cube has been chosen to represent the positioning of positive and negative values, rather than a grid of cells (the latter might appear logical, since the axes are being treated as binary). This is because the model will be developed in future studies wherein the axes will most likely not be treated as binary, but scalar. Indeed, a great many linguistic phenomena would be more appropriately placed at some point between the positive and negative ends of each axis. A detailed examination of the complex and occasionally blurry nature of linguistic awareness (linked here most clearly to the metacommentary axis) which reveals how a binary classification is often insufficient can be found in Preston (1996). However, as a necessary first step in the creation of such a model, a degree of simplification is required, hence the binary nature of the axes at present. As the scalar potential of the model is explored in future works, the intermediary points of the cube can be filled.

As it stands, the three binary axes of the cube give eight possible points which can be used to classify sociolinguistic phenomena. The phenomena under discussion are not limited to individual linguistic variables (as was the case in original Labovian discussions of CFA and CFB), although these are also included (to be seen in point (viii)). The term 'sociolinguistic phenomena' is used in a slightly broader sense and may include individual instances of status planning (as in (v)), or principles underpinning a particular corpus planning strategy (as in point (ii)). It is not the linguistic varieties themselves that are placed at individual points of the cube, but rather these individual phenomena. A full investigation of all the possible configurations and of how frequently they are attested is beyond the scope of this introductory paper.[10] However, each of the eight points will be briefly addressed, in order to demonstrate how three simple axes can be used to classify a wide range of sociolinguistic processes and phenomena. The eight potential points appear on the cube as follows:

[10] Density of population of different points and axes will undoubtedly be the subject of future study, as this will provide a means of ascertaining the orthogonality of the three axes. However, as a first step, this article will investigate how many points on the cube have the potential to be populated at all.

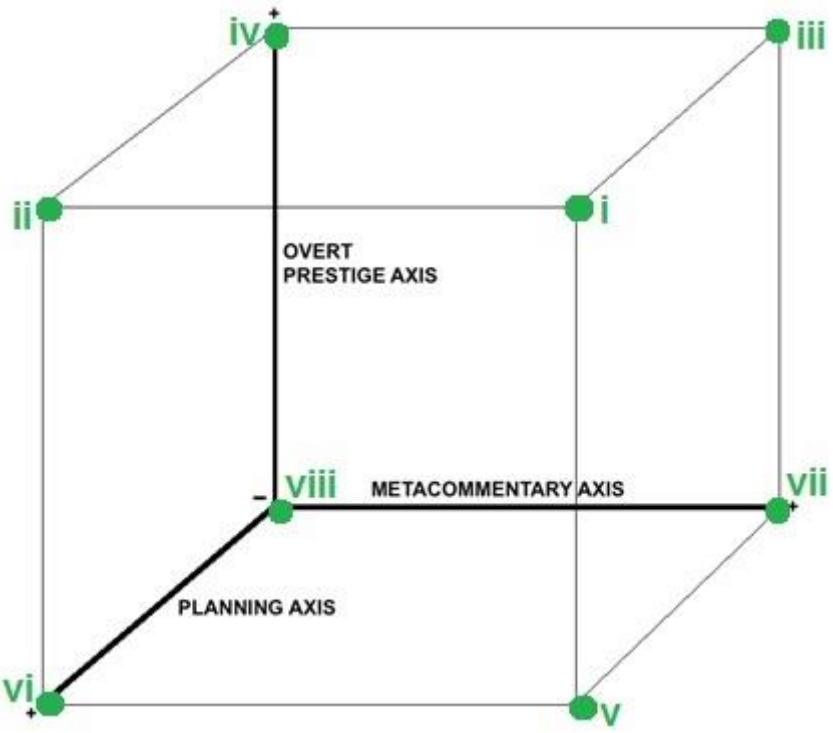

Figure 3: The eight points under discussion on the three-dimensional model.

(i) +metacommentary, +overt prestige, +planned. This configuration is frequently attested, since planned phenomena introduced with the support of official bodies are often motivated by overt prestige and can provoke metacommentary in speakers (particularly in the early stages of embedding in the linguistic community). A linguistic phenomenon which exemplifies this first configuration is the publishing of the Catalan *propostes per a un estàndard oral* (IEC 1999), a reference guide for how native speakers of Catalan should pronounce their language. This document is sponsored by the official regulatory body, the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (+planned), and while it claims to be appropriate for both formal and informal registers, the language contained therein approximates the spoken Catalan varieties that are already rich in overt prestige (+overt prestige). Moreover, the fact that this language is codified in this sort of manual means that its occurrence can clearly elicit metacommentary, if only by virtue of the fact that it appears in a text promoting the normative nature of such linguistic forms (+metacommentary).

(ii) -metacommentary, +overt prestige, +planned. As we shall see, the ability of a phenomenon to elicit metacommentary is linked to the degree of embedding in the speech commentary. Processes that start out as +metacommentary in the early stages of implementation may, over time, become so successfully ingrained in the linguistic community that they fall below the level of consciousness and cease to provoke metacommentary. An example of this would be the generalized use of a standardized orthography in a particular linguistic community. Returning to Catalan, Pompeu Fabra's linguistic normalization efforts of the early twentieth century have resulted in the widespread adoption of his suggested spellings as normative. Fabra's choices often followed the principle of diasystematicity, whereby as many diatopic variants were included as useful (Costa Carreras 2009: 44). This means that a speaker of Eastern Catalan will use an orthography that reflects the pronunciation of Western Catalan (an example being the feminine plural marker *-es*). Such usage is not even necessarily subject to variation within one language user, and has long since fallen below the level of consciousness, given its degree of embedding. Therefore, at the time of implementation, such a phenomenon would have likely scored positive on all three axes (since new spellings would be the subject of discussion due to their novelty if nothing else), but has since lost the ability to elicit metacommentary.

(iii) +metacommentary, +overt prestige, -planned. Speakers' accommodation towards overt prestige variants does not necessarily need to be the result of official language planning. Studies of British English offer extensive evidence of processes of speaker accommodation towards overt prestige varieties in the absence of official planning measures (cf. Trudgill 1974 discussed in point (iv)). However, in order for these processes to score positively on the +/- metacommentary axis, they must not only be subject to speaker variation, but elicit metacommentary. Therefore, this point on the cube best describes instances where such accommodation is potentially performative and conscious. Cameron's (2012) discussion of her concept of *verbal hygiene* provides numerous examples of such language practices. These include what she terms 'traditional (verbal hygiene) advice for women' (Cameron 2012:

172), wherein men overtly dictate what sort of linguistic practices women should engage in: such practices, while not supported by official planning or legislature, are most frequently approximations to an overt prestige standard, and the very deliberate and conscious means of their implementation show that they elicit metacommentary.

(iv) -metacommentary, +overt prestige, -planned. Commonly attested cases of accommodation towards prestige variants fit onto this point of the cube, wherein speakers can show variation (dependent on interlocutor for example), but do not need to be able to provide metacommentary on the process. Examples of such accommodation can be found in Labov's (1966) rapid and anonymous survey which revealed speaker approximation towards overt prestige variants in more careful speech, as well as in Trudgill's (1974, 93-4) study of Norwich where the overt prestige realization of the <-ing> variable (i.e. [ɪŋ] as opposed to [ɪn]) is more often produced in formal and reading passage exercises than in casual speech. This speaker variation did not elicit metacommentary from participants (and so would be considered a Labovian marker as opposed to a stereotype) and thus can be placed at this point on the cube.

(v) +metacommentary, -overt prestige, +planned. At first glance, it is not simple to find a phenomenon that receives the institutional support of official planning, but does not concern a language variety already rich in overt prestige. Despite a generalized view of German as pluricentric, certain varieties are considered dominant, with Austrian German often regarded as inferior to German German (cf. Havinga 2015). However, recent efforts have been made by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education and Women's Affairs to introduce elements of Austrian German into classroom settings (cf. BMBF 2014 for an official governmental pamphlet advising on how to use Austrian German in schools). This language policy decision elicits metacommentary (since it occurs above the level of consciousness), and has the support of official governmental planning. However, the variety promoted does not already approximate language use rich in overt prestige. Note it is the policy decision we find at point (v), and not the variety of Austrian German as a whole.

(vi) -metacommentary, -overt prestige, +planned. This point on the cube is arguably the most problematic. It is very difficult to conceive of a situation whereby an official organization would be able to surreptitiously (i.e. so as to not elicit metacommentary) promote a variety which is low in overt prestige. Even if this is possible, it begs the question of why any official body would expend resources in undertaking such an act. Moreover, the link between embedding and metacommentary does not hold here, since a process at this point on the cube needs to be -overt prestige: the sort of language revitalization efforts found at point (v) on the cube, if they are successfully embedded, should result in high overt prestige of the variety in question. However, the fact that phenomena are unlikely to be found at this point on the cube does not undermine the validity of the model: the fact that the other seven points are attested reveals that all three axes are necessary, though future studies will determine the orthogonality of the three axes.

(vii) +metacommentary, -overt prestige, -planned. A number of language practices can be classified in this way, and many are performative in nature. Beal (2009) gives an analysis of British indie group Arctic Monkeys' use of Sheffield variants in their music as indexical of an identity that runs contrary not only to standard British norms, but also to dominant trends in the music industry, which often favor American pronunciation. The performative nature of this type of linguistic practice means that it is clearly above the level of consciousness (+metacommentary), but is neither supported by any official planning, nor motivated by overt prestige. Processes at this point of the cube do not necessarily need to be performative, and linguistic stereotypes with low prestige arguably also fit here, since they elicit metacommentary, but are neither planned nor driven by overt prestige. Any non-standard realizations of Trudgill’s

(1974, 93-4) Norwich <-ing> variable (i.e. [ɪn] as opposed to [ɪŋ]) thus belong here, since they form part of a larger stereotype of 'dropping your g's'.[11]

(viii) -metacommentary, -overt prestige, -planned. This final configuration is often attested, with a clear example being contact-induced language practices such as borrowing or code-switching. Phenomena of linguistic convergence between, for example, Catalan and Castilian can indeed be categorized as unconscious, not motivated by overt prestige and not supported by official planning (cf. Hawkey 2012).[12] An example of one such phenomenon would be phonological interference from Catalan in the Spanish of Catalonia, as in the voicing of intervocalic Spanish [s] to [z] (as in Catalonia Spanish [loza'miɣos] from normative Spanish [losa'miɣos], discussed in Davidson 2014).

5. Conclusions

The above cursory examination has revealed that at least seven of the eight points on the cube are attested, reinforcing the need for all three axes. At present, the main strength of this model is its ability to effectively and rigorously taxonomize different language situations and speech communities according to the multiple, diverse and simultaneous linguistic phenomena that may be at work.[13] Herein lies the potential predictive power of the model:

[11] Note that the overt prestige variant of [ɪŋ] elicited under formal conditions can be found at point (iv) of the cube, given a relative lack of metacommentary surrounding overt prestige variants. This is due to the often 'unremarkable' nature of normative language as propounded by the 'ideology of the standard' (Lippi-Green 1997: 67).

[12] It should be noted that such practices can occasionally be performative (and thereby +metacommentary), or driven by overt prestige (for example, if a speaker wants to show evidence of competence in a highly-regarded foreign variety). As ever, the position occupied on the cube needs to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

[13] 'Language situation' is a place-holder term which refers to a broader configuration of language

when looking at ostensibly different situations, we may be able to witness similarities that are not brought into clear focus, other than through use of the model. In pinpointing previously unseen similarities between different language situations, we will be able to use comparative techniques to predict how these situations might develop, what policies might be effective, how the languages may change etc.

A brief example will illustrate simultaneity of phenomena within a particular linguistic situation, as well as the potential of the model to highlight unforeseen similarities between situations that do not at first appear analogous. Let us compare two types of community – a geographically and culturally defined speech community on the one hand, and an 'occupational community' on the other.[14] A multiplicity of linguistic pressures and phenomena are at work in these different types of language community, and an analysis using the current model might underline commonalities between two seemingly highly distinct cases. For this example, I shall examine the geographically-bound community of Catalan speakers in Catalonia alongside the occupational community of airline cabin crew (as discussed extensively in Clark 2013). We have already seen that the multiple forces at work in the Catalan speech community can be placed on numerous points on the cube depending on the phenomenon under discussion. At work in this speech community are forces categorized at

practices than the term 'phenomenon'. A 'situation' might be a speech community or linguistic variety, while 'phenomenon' refers to the specific practices or variables analysed in the previous section. So, for example, point (i) describes the 'phenomenon' of the introduction of the *propòstes per a un estàndard oral*; the corresponding 'situation' would be the Catalan speech community of Catalonia.

[14] The term 'occupational community' was coined by Van Maanen and Barley (1984), and developed to include linguistic practices by Marschall (2002). This term is considered more appropriate than the broader 'community of practice', since it is not bound up with the notion of repeated interaction between members. An 'occupational community' consists of members who may never come into contact with one another but are nonetheless bound by a set of common behavioural (and linguistic) norms.

point (i) of the cube (+metacommentary, +overt prestige, +planned), such as the aforementioned *propostes per a un estàndard oral*. At the same time, competing pressures are also at work in the same speech situation, including spontaneous variation categorized at point (iv) of the cube (-metacommentary, +overt prestige, -planned).[15] Moreover, we have already addressed the implementation of Fabrian norms (point (ii): -metacommentary, +overt prestige, +planned) and contact-induced linguistic phenomena (point (viii): -metacommentary, -overt prestige, -planned). A cursory examination of the Catalan speech community in Catalonia reveals that the simultaneous forces at work could be represented on the cube as follows:

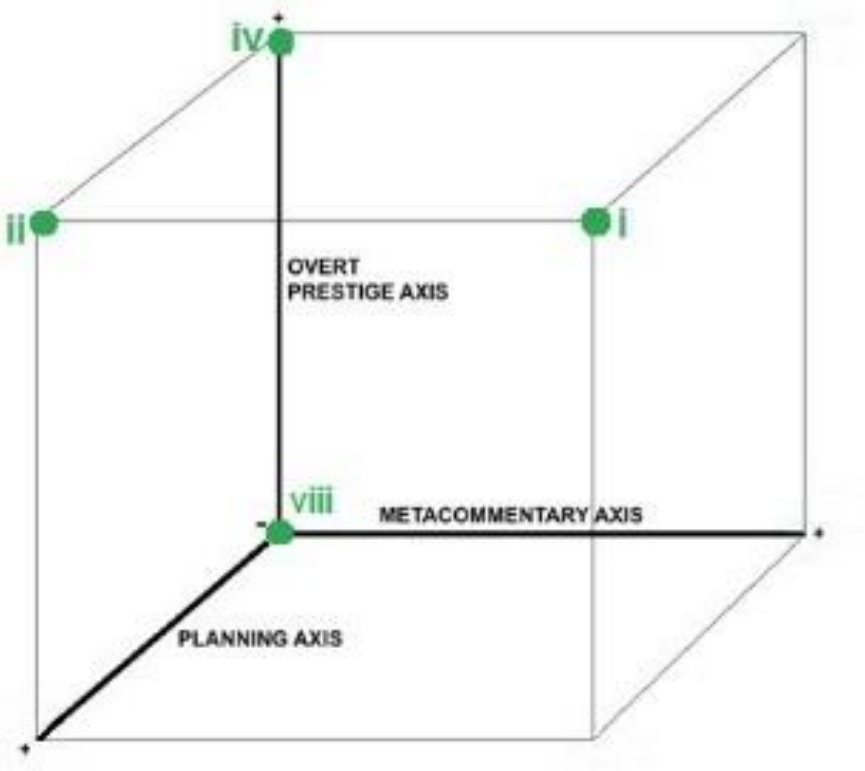

Figure 4: Cube model representation of the above description of the Catalan speech community in Catalonia

[15] A great deal of Labovian variationist work has been undertaken in the Catalan context. For an excellent overview, see Turell 2013.

Turning to our occupational community, again, we see a range of factors at work. Firstly, cabin crew are required to use a very specific, technical, highly-regulated register of vocabulary which is codified (+planned), performative (+metacommentary) and motivated by overt prestige forms. This vocabulary covers a range of 'safety talk' including the pre-flight safety briefing and emergency commands. This language is codified in confidential documents issued by individual airlines to employees. There is a high degree of official planning behind the wording of this technical vocabulary: in the United States, for example, each airline has its own specific safety briefings, the content of which must be approved by the Federal Aviation Administration, which in turn received direction on such matters from the International Civil Aviation Organization. Cabin crew are required to undergo initial training sessions and subsequent annual reviews, and in order to pass, must be able to repeat this specific language verbatim (personal communication, Barbara Clark 2015). All of this is potentially competing with strategies employed by flight attendants in interactions with passengers, which again is likely to demonstrate the type of Labovian variation categorized at point (iv) of the cube. Indeed, such interactions may entail a high degree accommodation to overt prestige norms on the part of the flight attendant, in order to demonstrate their specialist knowledge and thus reinforce their role as safety (as opposed to service) professional, be this with pilots, superiors or passengers (cf. Clark 2015). Based on these brief observations, the phenomena at work in the community of practice of flight attendants could be represented thus:

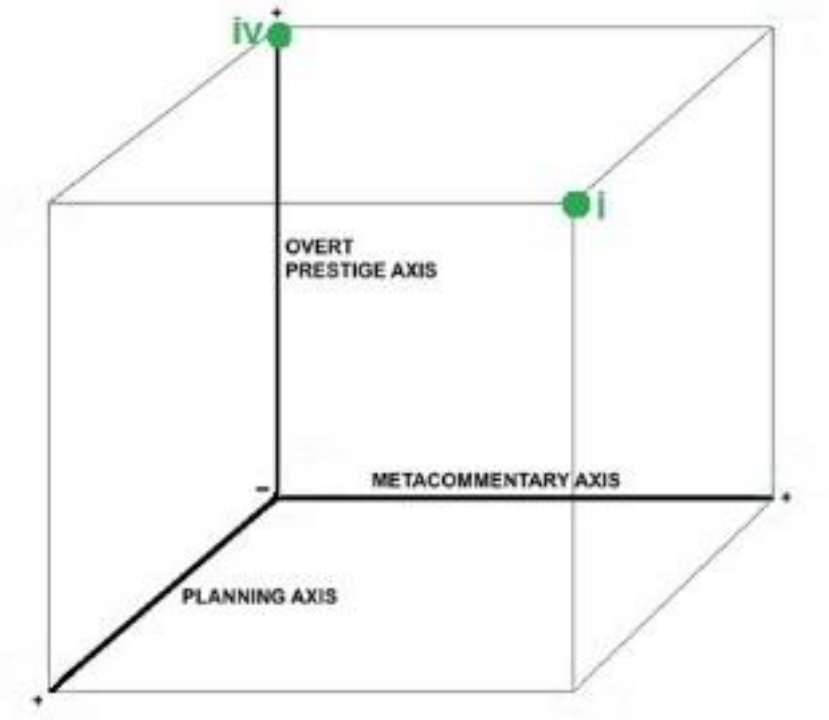

Figure 5: Cube model representation of the above description of airline cabin crew language practices.

These two different situations – Catalan speakers in Catalonia and airline cabin crew – can be seen to coincide on points (i) and (iv) of the cube model. The conflicting pressures acting upon these two very different types of linguistic community can thus be seen to share certain commonalities. The next obvious step would be to enquire as to the predictive implications of the model – if the two communities resemble one another as regards the above points on the cube, what else might they share? Since the model is still in its early stages of development, any observations made at present are mere speculation. However, it may transpire that, upon examination of multiple linguistic communities, variables and practices, correlations between different points on the cube become visible. If a given community (for example) is classified as occupying points (i) and (iv) on the cube, it may prove the case that such communities tend to also occupy point (ii) (at present this has been seen with Catalonia, but could prove to be a more general trend upon further investigation) – this latter phenomenon may not be

immediately apparent, but could be brought to light through use of the model.[16] Though, as stated, a more extensive discussion of the model would be required before any firm conclusions can be drawn in this regard.

This article has made significant progress on several fronts. Firstly, the terms CFA and CFB have been clarified, and the differences between various scholars' interpretations have been highlighted. Secondly, a new model of linguistic phenomena has been proposed which visually captures the potential simultaneity of forces of language variation and change in a given community. Future work will allow all of these points to be developed, and will hopefully make for interesting scholarly debate.

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[16] It should be noted that the taxonomizing of phenomena according to the model is undertaken as a thorough post-hoc analysis of each linguistic situation. The different phenomena are first identified and then assessed according to the model, which highlights any cross-situational similarity. If phenomena were cherry-picked beforehand according to the criteria of the model, its use may be seen as circular, so this is to be avoided.

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